

ANIMAL and PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

CHARTER

NATIONAL POULTRY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

1. Committee's Official Designation

The General Conference Committee (GCC) of the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP).

2. Authority

The regulations at title 9, Code of Federal Regulations (9 CFR) section 147.43 establish the General Conference Committee (GCC). The Secretary establishes the GCC pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. App. 2. USDA reserves to itself all discretion required by FACA.

3. Objectives and Scope of Activities

The GCC, representing cooperating State agencies and poultry industry members, acts as a liaison between the poultry industry and the Department. The GCC maintains and ensures industry participation and advice in Federal involvement in matters relating to poultry health and administration of the NPIP.

4. Description of Duties

The duties of the GCC (described in 9 CFR 147.43(d)) involve assisting the Department in planning, organizing, and conducting the NPIP Biennial Conference. Between Plan Conferences, the GCC represents the cooperating States in: advising the Department on administrative procedures and interpretations of the Plan provisions as contained in 9 CFR; assisting the Department in evaluating comments received from interested persons concerning proposed amendments to the Plan provisions; recommending to the Secretary any changes in Plan provisions when postponement until the next Plan Conference would seriously impair the operation of the program; and serving as a forum for the study of problems relating to poultry health.

5. Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports

The GCC will report to the Secretary of Agriculture through the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs. The NPIP Senior Coordinator serves as the GCC's Executive Secretary and as the liaison between the GCC and the Under Secretary.

6. Support

The Executive Secretary will provide the necessary staff support for the GCC.

7. Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years

During even-numbered years, the GCC meets at the time and place of the Biennial Plan Conference. The expenses during those years are usually considerably higher than during the odd-numbered years when committee meetings are held in Atlanta, Georgia or another location.

a. The estimated cost in even-numbered years is \$25,000 including 0.28 staff years.

b. The estimated cost in odd-numbered years is \$12,500 including 0.07 staff years.

8. Designated Federal Officer

A permanent Federal employee is to be appointed in accordance with agency procedures and will serve as the Designated Federal Official (DFO). The DFO will be the NPIP Senior Coordinator. The DFO will approve the advisory committee's and subcommittees' meetings, prepare and approve all meeting agendas, attend all committee and subcommittee meetings, adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.

9. Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings

Meetings will be held annually or as the Secretary of Agriculture deems necessary.

10. Duration

The GCC will be established for 2 years from the filing date of the charter.

11. Termination

The charter will be in effect for 2 years from the filing date. After the initial 2-year period, the charter may be renewed as authorized in accordance with Section 14 of FACA.

12. Membership and Designation

12a. The GCC will be fairly balanced in its membership in terms of the points of view represented and the functions to be performed. Steps will be taken to encourage fresh points of view, such as establishing staggered membership terms and limiting the number of renewed memberships.

12b. Equal opportunity practices in accordance with USDA policies will be followed in all appointments to the Committee. To ensure that the GCC's recommendations have taken into account the needs of the diverse groups served by USDA, membership will include, to the extent possible, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, persons with limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities.

12c. The USDA prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

One member from each of six geographic areas of the United States and a member-at-large will be elected as prescribed in 9 CFR 147.43(b). Pursuant to 9 CFR 147.43(c), membership terms are 4 years in length.

12d. Of these members, one will become the chairperson who is recognized for his or her ability to lead a group in a fair and focused manner and who has been briefed on the GCC's mission. A co-chairperson may be assigned, especially to facilitate his or her becoming the chairperson in the future. The Committee chairperson and vice-chairperson shall be elected by the GCC from among its members.

12e. Ethics Statement

To maintain the highest levels of honesty, integrity, and ethical conduct, no Committee or subcommittee member shall participate in any "specific party matters" (i.e., matters are narrowly focused and typically involve specific transactions between identified parties) such as a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, grant, agreement, or related litigation with the Department in which the member has a direct or indirect financial interest. This includes the requirement for committee or subcommittee members to immediately disclose to the DFO any specific party matter in which the member's immediate family, relatives, business partners, or employer would be directly seeking to financially benefit from the GCC's recommendations.

All members will receive ethics training to identify and avoid any actions that would cause the public to question the integrity of the GCC's advice and recommendations. Members who are appointed as "Representatives" are not subject to Federal ethics laws because such appointment allows them to represent the points of view of a particular group, business sector, or segment of the public.

Members appointed as "Special Government Employees" (SGEs) are considered intermittent Federal employees and are subject to Federal ethics laws. SGEs are appointed due to their personal knowledge, academic scholarship, background, or expertise. No SGE may participate in any activity in which the member has a prohibited financial interest. Appointees who are SGEs are required to complete and submit a Confidential Financial Disclosure Report (OGE-450 form). USDA will help SGEs prepare these financial reports on request. To ensure the highest level of compliance with applicable ethical standards, USDA will annually provide ethics training to SGEs. The provisions of these paragraphs are not meant to exhaustively cover all Federal ethics laws and do not affect any other statutory or regulatory obligations to which advisory committee members are subject.

13. Subcommittees

The Designated Federal Official has the authority to create subcommittees. Subcommittees must report back to the parent committee, and must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency.

14. Recordkeeping

The records of this committee, formally and informally established subcommittees, or other subgroups of the committee, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 26, Item 2, or other approved agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552. Information about the GCC is available online at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_dis_spec/poultry/.

15. Filing Date

October 1, 2014